

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-02 /061 W
-----011308 210855Z /23

R 201535Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3212
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1999

EUR/EE PLEASE PASS TO AMBASSADOR BYRNE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CZ
SUBJECT: CONTACTS WITH JIRI HANZELKA, CHARTER 77 SIGNATORY

1. THE EMBASSY HAS RECENTLY LEARNED OF POSSIBILITY OF ACQUIRING THE LARGE PRIVATE RESIDENCE OF JIRI HANZELKA, A FORMERLY PROSPEROUS CZECH WRITER, IN CHOICE HILLTOP AREA OF NORTHWEST PRAGUE OVERLOOKING VLTAVA RIVER. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL CONTACTS WITH HANZELKA IN THE PAST WEEK AND PRESENTLY BELIEVE IT ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO EITHER RENT OR EVENTUALLY PURCHASE THIS RESIDENCE, WHICH HE FEELS OBLIGED TO RELINQUISH IN ORDER TO OBTAIN FUNDS WITH WHICH HIS CHILDREN AND HE CAN CONTINUE TO MAKE ENDS MEET.

2. IN ONE RECENT CONTACT, CHARGE ACCOMPANIED BY
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ACTING ADMIN. OFFICER (DISHAW) INSPECTED THE PROPERTY, AND HANZELKA OFFERED A FEW CAUTIOUS REMARKS ON HIS TROUBLES STEMMING FROM SIGNING CHARTER 77 AND FROM HIS TIES WITH THE DUBCEK REFORM MOVEMENT IN 1968-69 -- WHEN HE WAS A PROMINENT MEMBER OF THE CZECH WRITERS UNION PRESIDUM.

3. RECALLING HIS EARLIER FINANCIAL SUCCESSES FROM

LUCRATIVE CONTRACTS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND PUBLICATIONS

-- FOR EXAMPLE, A STUDY OF AFRICA PUBLISHED IN OVER 6,000,000 COPIES AND IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT LANGUAGES-- HANZELKA NOTED THAT SINCE 1968 HIS ABILITY TO MAKE AN INCOME HAS STEADILY DIMINISHED TO THE POINT THAT HE NOW RECEIVES ONLY 1600 CZECHOSLOVAK CROWNS PER MONTH. (IN VIENNA, COMMERCIAL BANKS PRESENTLY USE AN EXCHANGE RATE OF APPROXIMATELY 25 CROWNS TO THE US DOLLAR; AT THIS RATE, HANZELKA'S MONTHLY INCOME WOULD BE ABOUT \$65.00). A FORMER MILLIONAIRE IN CROWN HOLDINGS, HANZELKA HAS DECIDED HE WOULD RATHER GIVE UP HIS PRIZED RESIDENCE THAN CAVE IN TO REGIME PRESSURES AND CONFORM TO PARTY DICTATES.

4. A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THE HANZELKA RESIDENCE IS A LARGE MODERN PIPE ORGAN REPORTEDLY WORTH \$200,000 ITSELF. HANZELKA PLANS TO LEAVE THIS INSTRUMENT INSTALLED IN THE RESIDENCE "FOR A YEAR OR TWO", UNTIL HE DECIDES WHETHER TO SELL

OR MOVE IT. HE SAID HE HAD TRIED TO SHIFT FROM WRITING CAREER TO MUSIC, BUT THE REGIME HAD BLOCKED HIS WAY. HE HAD PASSED TWO STAGES OF EXAMINATION TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIST, BEFORE THE PARTY STEPPED IN TO THWART HIM. WITH GREAT SKILL, HE PLAYED TWO PIECES--ONE BY BACH, THE OTHER BY A CZECH COMPOSER--TO "SHOW WHAT THE INSTRUMENT WILL DO."

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5. COMMENT: WHILE IT WAS NOT FEASIBLE TO ENTER INTO A DETAILED DISCUSSION OF CHARTER 77 WITH HANZELKA, MAINLY BECAUSE AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE WAS PRESENT AT ALL TIMES, HE NONETHELESS GOT ACROSS HIS OWN DETERMINATION NOT TO BUCKLE UNDER TO THE HUSAK REGIME. HE ALSO MADE A POINT OF EMPHASIZING THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE "NOT TRYING TO CHANGE THE CZECHOSLOVAK CONSTITUTION," BUT WILL CONTINUE TO STATE THEIR CASE THAT CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS BE TRULY RESPECTED. HANZELKA INDICATES HE WISHES TO REMAIN IN OR CLOSE TO PRAGUE AND HAS NO INTENTION OF EMIGRATING.
FROWICK

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 20-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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